

The Astronomy Genealogy Project: A Progress Report

Joseph S. Tenn, Sonoma State University

Although it is not yet visible, much progress has been made on the Astronomy Genealogy Project (AstroGen) since it was accepted as a project of the Historical Astronomy Division (HAD) three years ago. AstroGen will list the world's astronomers with information about their highest degrees and advisors. (In academic genealogy, your thesis advisor is your parent.) A small group (the AstroGen Team) has compiled a database of approximately 12,000 individuals who have earned doctorates with theses (dissertations) on topics in astronomy, astrophysics, cosmology, or planetary science. These include nearly all those submitted in Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, and New Zealand, and most of those in the United States (all through 2014 for most universities and all through 1990 for all). We are compiling more information than is maintained by the Mathematics Genealogy Project (MGP). In addition to name, degree, university, year of degree, and thesis advisor(s), all provided by MGP as well, we are including years of birth and death when available, mentors in addition to advisors, and links to the thesis when it is online and to the person's web page or obituary, when we can find it. We are still struggling with some questions, such as the boundaries of inclusion and whether or not to include subfields of astronomy. We believe that AstroGen will be a valuable resource for historians of science as well as a source of entertainment for those who like to look up their academic family trees. A dedicated researcher following links from AstroGen will be able to learn quite a lot about the careers of astronomy graduates of a particular university, country, or era. We are still seeking volunteers to enter the graduates of one or more universities.

The Astronomy Genealogy Project: A Progress Report

Joseph S. Tenn
Sonoma State University

HAD, AAS
5 January 2016

Outline

What is AstroGen?

Why are we doing this?

What have we accomplished so far?

How can you help?

What is AstroGen?

AstroGen is the Astronomy Genealogy Project, patterned after the Mathematics Genealogy Project

We will list the world's astronomers with

Name, dates, links

Highest degree, university, year, thesis title (and link when online), advisor(s).

Why are we doing this?

It will provide useful data for historians and sociologists of science.

It is fun!

What have we accomplished so far?

We have entered 13,500 "astronomers".

This includes nearly all who have earned doctorates in

	Universities	Astronomers
Australia	17	673
Canada	24	797
Netherlands	7	882
New Zealand	4	83

In addition we have entered

most (1031) who have earned doctorates from a few universities in the UK, and

10,200 from the USA

all for 134 universities

through 1990 for 15 universities

At this time, it's all in spreadsheets

Information has been obtained from the web, including ProQuest, available to those affiliated with subscribing institutions

We include links to personal pages, obituaries, theses.

We read and use acknowledgments sections (and vitae) in online theses.

One problem is universities

They merge, they split, they change names.

One solution is to link from the person's page to a page for the university.

The university page can give information about previous names, institutions absorbed, etc. and link to the university's current web page.

If we do this, we need a page for each university, too.

How can you help?

Advise on decision-making and formats

Design pages

Organize the list of universities

Enter astronomers

from a university to which you have access

from the web (need 15 from U.S., many from other countries)